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ISLAM IN CHINA

THERE is no consensus of opinion among historians as to when the Muslims first entered China. The Chinese Muslim traditions, however, place the first coming to China of a follower of Islam in the time of the Holy Prophet himself. There is at Canton a famous mosque known as the Hwai Sheng Szu, "Prophet Remembrance" mosque, the original of which is believed to have been built by the Prophet's envoy Sa'd Wakkas. Near this mosque is an ancient tomb which is said to be the resting place of this pioneer. A well-known Chinese Muslim writer, Liu Chiai-lien, writes in his *Life of Muhammad* concerning the advent of the first Muslims in China:

"In the sixth year of K'ai Hwang, of the Sui dynasty (568 A.D.) which was the first year of the prophethood of Muhammad, there was seen in the sky a strange star: the Chinese-Emperor Wen Ti, commanded the chief astronomer to divine its meaning, and he said that there would be an extraordinary person appearing in the West. The Emperor sent an envoy to investigate if this really was so, and after about a year he arrived at Mecea. He desired the Prophet to accompany him back to the East but he declined. The envoy secretly had a portrait of the Prophet made to take back with him. The Prophet sent Sa'd Wakkas (his maternal uncle), and three others, to go with the envoy to China."

Again Liu Chiai-lien says:—

"In the second year of Muhammad's commission as Prophet, the Emperor of China had sent an envoy and the Prophet sent Sa'd Wakkas back with him. The Emperor had a mosque built, and Wakkas returned to Arabia. After more than twenty years, another envoy was sent to the West; this was in the time of the Emperor Yang Ti (605 A.D.) Muhammad again sent Wakkas to China, saying that as some who had

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gone before had not returned, they must now be increasing in numbers, and it was fitting that they should be taught the Quran, and instructed in the rites and ceremonies."

There seems to be a blending of fact and fiction in the story narrated above and some confusion of dates also. The story referred to was not, however, described first by Liu but is found in several Chinese-Muslim books of much earlier origin. It may or may not be true or it may be partially true.

Another important source of knowledge about the entering into China of the early Muslims are the stone monuments. One of these monuments which is considered to be the oldest and is dated 742 A.D., bears a Tablet known as Sianfu tablet. It reads as follows :—

"Although the teaching of Muhammad was similar to that of other sages, it prevailed at first only in the West, and China had not heard of it until the time of the Emperor K'ai Hwang of the Sui dynasty (581—601 A.D.) when it entered China, and gradually spread throughout the Empire. His Imperial Majesty Tie'n Pao, of our present dynasty commanded the superintendent of public works to build this mosque for the accommodation of the followers of this religion. This work was begun on a lucky day of the third month of the first year of Ti'en Pao, and was completed on the twentieth day of the eighth month of the same year. Lest this incident should be forgotten, as time goes on, this tablet is set up as a remembrance, and the circumstances inscribed therein, the tablet being erected on a lucky day of the eighth month of the first year of the Emperor Ti'en Pao (742 A.D)."

This monument may not be genuine but it is quite possible that a mosque was built at Sianfu in the year mentioned, as there had been visits of Muslims earlier than that. But leaving aside traditions and monuments of doubtful genuineness we can safely say on the basis of historical grounds that commercial intercourse between China and Arabia dates as

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far back as the fifth century A.D. It is very probable that soon after the Hegira, when Islam spread throughout Arabia, some of the traders to the East had become converts, and these would observe their religion at the place where they visited, or resided, in China. But because the Hegira was in 622 A.D. it is not probable that any follower of the Holy Prophet came to China earlier than that. It is believed by a class of historians that during the illustrious T'ang dynasty (618—907) the Muslims first came to China. The brief account of the coming of the Muslims that is found in the T'ang history is as follows: —"In the second year of Yung Hui (651 A.D.) the Ta'-shih King 'Amirul-Mumenin' (Prince of the Believers), first sent an envoy to the court with tribute, who said that the kings of Ta-shih had possessed the country for 34 years, through two successive generations. In the beginning of Kai Yaug (713—742 A.D.) a Muslim envoy was sent with a present of horses and a magnificent girdle. Another envoy, named Sulaiman, is believed to have been sent in 726 A.D. Abu Jafar, the builder of Baghdad, according to the T'ang history, sent his envoy in 756 A.D. Soldiers to help the Emperor of China against a rebel, An Lu-shan, were also sent in 763 by Abu Jafar. Most of them did not return and married Chinese wives and became, so it is believed, the nucleus of the Chinese Muslims of to-day. It will be useful to translate what is said about Muslims in the T'ang history. It reads: "Ta-shih (Muhammadan Arabs) was originally part of Persia. The men have high noses, are black and bearded. The women are very fair (white and *when they go out they veil the face* (italics are our). Five times daily they workship God. They wear silver girdles, with silver knives suspended. They do not drink wine, nor use music. Their place of worship will accommodate several hundreds of people. Every seventh day the king (Caliph) sits on high and speaks to those below saying: 'Those who are killed by the enemy will be born in heaven above; those who slay the enemy will receive happiness. Therefore they are usually valiant fighters. Their land is sandy and stony, not fit for cultivation: so they hunt and eat flesh."

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The account of an Arab traveller, Abu Zeid'al' Hasan of Siraf, who was in China in 878 A.D., helps us a great deal in forming a nearly correct conjecture about the probable date when the Muslims first entered this country. He tells us of a revolution and the siege of Canfu City by a rebel leader and proceeds : " At last he became master of the city, and put all the inhabitants to the sword. There are persons fully acquainted with the affairs of China who assure us that besides the Chinese who were massacred on this occasion there perished one hundred and twenty thousand Muhammadans, Jews, Christians and Parsees, who were there on account of traffic."

The fact that there was a large number of Muslims residing in a town of China so early as 878 A.D., leads us to the conclusion that the historical surmise that they entered this country shortly after the Flight may not be quite wide of the mark as is suggested by some Christian historians who do not like to ascribe to Islam that wonderful power of expansion which they realise Christianity does not possess. But in spite of their antipathy towards everything that redounds to the honour of Islam they cannot deny that officially the Muslims were known in China in 651 A.D., when the embassy from Caliph Othman was received. The coming of an official mission to China presupposes the presence of good many Muslims in the country who would have gone there to trade and took their religion with them. The Arabs were great traders and great missionaries. It is not strange, therefore, that they came to China even in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. It is established beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Muslims came to China in large numbers in the 8th century and settled down to family life. Whether they came in the first half of the seventh century, as is our contention, or in the first half of the 8th century, as the missionary historians contend, Canton will go down to history as the place which was illumined first of all in the whole of China by the Light which emanated from Mecca and which was destined to illumine the spiritually dark world for all times to come.

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THE APPEAL OF ISLAM TO HUMAN INTELLECT

RECENT years have witnessed the conversion to Islam of steadily increasing numbers of highly educated men, European and Asiatic, of comparatively high status in life and belonging to the intellectual classes. This is no doubt in large measure due to the initiation during the last three decades of organised missionary work in non-Islamic countries and to the presentation in an intelligible form of the truths of Islam for the benefit of non-Muslims, chiefly it may be said through the agency of Ahmadiyya missions. The question, however, presents itself, wherein lies the appeal of Islam to highly cultured men, brought up under other cultural and religious influences? What, it will be asked, does Islam offer to thinking men that other religions and philosophical systems do not. It is important, in the interests of successful mission work in the future, to find an answer to this question, and this we shall endeavour to do, though obviously it is impossible in the course of a brief article of this kind to do more than indicate the tendencies that are leading to this acceptance of Islam by cultured intellectuals in different parts of the world.

A Rational Theory of Life

It has been said that a man's religion is the relation which he believes himself to bear with the eternal universe. The thinking man, sooner or later, desires to find in rational theory of life, an explanation of the universe and of his relation with it. This relation it has been the object of all religions to explain, and it is from religious teaching that every man gets his first ideas on the subject. In childhood and early youth, men naturally accept the explanation of life provided by the religion of their fathers. As years pass and learning develops the thinking faculties, blind unreasoning belief is replaced by intelligent examination

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and questioning; and the young man naturally seeks to harmonise the teachings of science as to the origins, phenomena and processes of life with the religious explanation of these phenomena which has been given to him in his childhood.

An Inadequate Explanation

Almost invariably, he finds that the religious theory of life which he has been taught as a child does not harmonise with the scientific "facts" which he has learned as a student; and then follows a period of agnosticism and not of atheism, when he rejects religious theory, and seeks to find a mechanistic explanation of the phenomena of life and of his relations with them. Neither the involved theology of Christianity with its trinity in unity, its personal anthropomorphic god and its primitive theory of creation, nor the many gods and still more numerous philosophical theories of Hinduism satisfy his reason, nor yet the philosophic agnosticism of Buddhism. Neither of these faiths, alike in their philosophy and in their attitude towards life, can satisfy his reason, and he seeks for some other theory of life, which while it will intelligently explain the relation of man to the universe, at the same time provides an ideal consistent with that explanation, to be pursued in life.

Natural Religion

The Hindu, born in a devout family, when he comes to a thinking age, is as revolted by the idol worship of popular Hinduism as he is fascinated by the ingenious theories of Hindu philosophy, so variant that as the late Lord Sinha once pointed out Hinduism has room for the man who believes in one god, for him who believes in many gods and even for one who denies God. But the student of Hinduism finds that these ingenious philosophic theories lead nowhere save to a philosophic agnosticism, and in their relationship with life are consistent with a low code of morals and with the anti-social practices of the caste system. The student finds the philosophy of the Vedas consistent with phallic worship, the protestant monotheistic

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theory of the Arya Samaj held along with the practice of Niyog.

Inconsistent Christianity

Nor does the man brought up in the doctrines of Christianity find when he examines them in the light of pure reason that they are any more satisfactory as a theory of life than popular or philosophic Hinduism. For popular Christianity whether tinged with the mysticism of the Catholic Church or the neo-platonism of the Modernists, is consistent with materialistic and anti-social civilisation. Christian doctrines are invoked to support the most bloody wars,—indeed in Medieval Europe when Christianity was really the religion of Europe and a living force, it was responsible for more bloodshed and cruelty than any other force. And if popular Christianity is inconsistent as a theory of life, the intelligent enquirer finds it equally hard to accept the masochistic Tolstoy-Gandhi interpretation of Christianity as a religion of non-resistance to evil, and he exclaims with Swinburne :

O, lips that the life blood faints in
O, leavings of racks and rods ;
O, ghastly glories of saints, dead limbs of gibbetted gods.
I kneel not neither adore you, but standing wait to the end.

The Natural Religion

The inconsistencies and absurdities of the religion of their youth has turned many sincere and virtuous men, like for example the late Lord Morley, away from religion, to philosophic agnosticism. But the negative creed of agnosticism, the refusal to pursue the search for ultimate truth on the authority of the self-assumed postulate that it is unattainable, as Herbert Spencer sincerely thought, is unsatisfactory, and is increasingly regarded as a desperate and hopeless refuge. Increasingly, in the revolt against materialistic and mechanistic theories of life, which the scientists are themselves rejecting, men are seeking for an explanation of life consistent with reason, and which

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reveals to man the Eternal Truth as to himself and his relation to the universe, in other words for a natural religion.

Islam the Natural Religion

It is Islam that provides this theory of life, acceptable at once to reason and satisfying those religious instincts which are inherent in man. For, as the late Syed Amir Ali pointed out in his great work, the *Spirit of Islam*, Islam is not 'mere creed; it is a life to be lived in the present'—a religion of right-doing right-thinking, and right-speaking, founded on Divine love, universal charity and the equality of man in the sight of the Lord". For the simple yet rational creed of Islam the first cause is One God, impersonal and without form or void, and Who has existed from the beginning and will always exist. From this one God proceeded the universe and man himself, created by God in the natural order of things. Even the materialists are concerned to find a First Cause, and surely it is more consistent to find that First Cause and eternal impulse of the universe in Allah than in a mass of protoplasm, a material atom or even an electron. Muslims believe in One God, Eternal, Omnipotent and the source and impulse of all being and life, and at the same time Merciful and Beneficent. This One God Islam teaches has not been content to leave erring humanity to struggle to truth and virtue unaided, but has from the beginning sent Prophets among mankind; whose message (each of them) was fitted to the stage of progress mankind had reached when they came.

An Explanation and Code

The revelation to man of his place in the universe and his mission was, Islam teaches, perfected through the Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace and the blessings of God). Like all other Prophets Muhammad claimed no divine origin, nor would he allow his followers to claim it for him. He came to reveal to man the purpose of God towards him and the revelation of that purpose is Islam. Here we have no

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complicated theology, no mysticism seeking after other worlds and despising this, but a simple and rational explanation of life, and a code enabling man to live to the best purpose so that he may benefit himself and his fellow-men in this world and attain salvation in the next.

Not Dead but Living

It has been said cynically that faith consists in believing what one knows to be not true. But there is no such inconsistency in the teachings of Islam. Thirteen hundred years have elapsed since Muhammad the Prophet (peace be on him) taught men the Eternal Truth as to God and the universe and man's relation to both. Since then material knowledge has made great progress, but nothing that we have learned in physical science in all these centuries is inconsistent with a single teaching of Islam. Men have progressed to a higher morality and a greater sense of their duty to their fellow-men, but there has not been one humane ideal, one beneficent social theory, one progressive and liberal law that was not anticipated in the Islamic Code. Humane warfare, the rights of man, liberty, international law, the emancipation of slaves, the rights of women, poor relief, democracy—every one of these progressive ideals has existed in Islam since that perfect philosophy and moral code were revealed to mankind by the Prophet of God. Islam is progressive, not stagnant, like its emblem the waxing Crescent it is ever-growing, and thinking men increasingly see in it the future hope of the world—a world set free by Eternal Truth.

Harmony and Completeness

In his interesting work *Islam at the Cross-Roads*, Muhammad Asad Weiss, a distinguished Austrian convert to Islam says, "Islam appears to me like a perfect work of architecture. All its parts are harmoniously conceived to complement and support each other; nothing is superfluous and nothing lacking, with the result of an absolute balance and solid composure." It is this essential unity and completeness

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of Islam that appeals to intellectuals all over this world, and that makes it at once the one rational explanation of life and rule of life. For Islam is at once a philosophy and a polity. While it satisfies man's religious desire and instincts, it at the same time gives to States as well as individuals, the world and its nations, the perfect code, observance of which can secure at once stability and progress. At a time when "the old faiths totter and fall, the new creeds ruin and rend," men increasingly turn to the one natural religion, Islam. For, has not the Prophet of God (peace be on him) said, "Every child is born with a disposition towards the natural religion. It is the parents who make it a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian."

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ARE EARTHQUAKES INCOMPATIBLE WITH DIVINE MERCY?

By Dr. M. S. Nawaz Khan, Medical Officer, Magadi (Kenya)

A question may be asked, when it is claimed that God is Beneficial and Merciful is not the tremendous destruction of life and property caused by earthquakes incompatible with divine mercy? Before answering this question we must first see whether the divine attribute of mercy is at all in evidence in the Universe. If this manifestation is observed (and experience tells us that it is being manifested every minute) then we shall have to study the significance of seismic disturbances in the light of this all-pervading divine attribute. It is our experience that every object in this world has got two phases of its activity. It is simultaneously useful and harmful. Even the things which are considered to be very useful are not altogether free from the element of harm. The general rule is that if the benefits of an object outweigh its harms then that object is considered useful. This rule applies to earthquakes as well. Earthquakes are also both beneficial and harmful. They act, as it were, like a double-edged sword. On the one hand they do some useful and constructive work and on the other prove harmful and destructive. But their benefits (though not easily perceivable) generally outweigh their harms which are obvious, hence they must not be considered to offend against the divine attribute of mercy.

A close study of human nature reveals the important fact that there are two incentives to obedience, *viz.*, love and fear. A great majority of men are moved to obedience and submission by love and a few only bow to fear. The Wise and Omniscient God makes use of both these elements when dealing with man. If people

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do not take advantage of repeated warnings and mighty signs of love, He sometimes shows His wrath as well in order to save their souls from perdition. Man, as said above, sometimes stands in need of the manifestation of God's Majesty and Power for the reformation of his ways. That manifestation of God's power takes the form of earthquakes which is the most violent force of nature which causes fear and thus greatly softens and moves the human heart.

Sacrifice and sufferings as commonly understood are the conditions preceding the achievement of any success in life. It is an unwritten Law of Nature that inferior things are sacrified so that higher life may thrive. Earthquakes do kill many but incidentally they lead thousands of people to a life of repentance, self-purification and virtue, by instilling the fear of God in their hearts. When we find that earthquakes help thousands of people in saving their souls from spiritual death at the cost of some who incidentally suffer physical death, how can we say that they are altogether harmful and destructive for mankind.

Physical Benefits of Earthquakes

Besides, earthquakes are not always even physically destructive. Modern seismograph records an average of 8,000 small shocks of earthquakes annually. It is common knowledge that out of these 8,000 it is hardly one or two shocks per year that cause destruction of life and property. This shows that earthquakes and other seismic disturbances are primarily meant for some great and vital constructive work. A study of the evolution of the earth shows that when our planet was a blazing, molten turbulent, mass and its surface was very unstable and tremulous continually quivering like a ball of hot quicksilver, it was due to great earthquakes and terrible volcanic eruptions that it gradually cooled down and its surface subsequently became stable which enabled vegetable and animal and human life to grow on it.

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Thus we see that it was on account of these earthquakes which are considered destructive that the earth took its present shape and became fit for human habitation. In these days as always we continue to get thousands of shocks, of which only very few cause any destruction of life and property.

These routine, imperceptable, small shocks are caused to prolong the life of our planet. They preserve or generate new stores of energy and food for the maintenance of life and for our industrial and agricultural requirements. When the upper strata of the earth's crust get exhausted, and their mineral (*viz.*, coal, iron, calcium, phosphorus, etc), and organic constituents are more or less consumed, a sudden upheaval with consequent jarring and vibration of earth's deeper crust occurs, which brings up deeper strata of the earth laiden with fresh mineral and orgranic constituents. This process goes on continually without our knowledge (except of course by a swing of the seismogr aph needle) and does not cause any harm. It is thus obvious that earthquakes are useful constituents since they prolong the life of our planet and provide for the maintenance of its inhabitants. This is perhaps one of the reasons why earthquakes are so frequent when a messenger of God appears in the world.

It would not be out of place here to remove one more misunderstanding regarding the divine attribute of mercy, *viz.*, how is it that so many innocent lives are lost along with a few wicked people who are sought to be punished by divine visitations. A moment's reflection will remove this misunderstanding. Situated as we are, we have sometimes to share the consequences of the actions of our neighbours. It is not possible to avoid it. One is bound to be influenced by one's company and neighbours, by their ideas, suggestions and habits. It is a law of nautre. This law works equally well in the physical realm. If a patient suffering from, say, tuberculosis or cholera carelessly causes the germ of his disease to spread, his friends, relatives and neighbours who mix with him and do not

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take necessary precautions are liable to catch the infection. Again, suppose a party of a dozen men is crossing a river in a boat and two of them get up and begin to smash the bottom of it with a hammer and the other innocent ten do not prevent them from doing so the latter are liable to be drowned along with the wicked. Similar instances can easily be multiplied which clearly show that we influence and are influenced by the actions of those with whom we live.

Spiritually speaking God's visiting the earth with His wrath in the form of famines, earthquakes and pestilences may be compared to the surgical operation of a surgeon. In order to save the whole body from destruction the surgeon does not feel the least hesitation in amputating the diseased limb and no body can call the amputation of the diseased limb by the doctor an act of cruelty.

Similarly does the Merciful God amputate the diseased limb of humanity – the wicked, the iniquitous and the recalcitrant among them—in order to save the rest of it from moral and spiritual death. The question why is a particular country at a particular time punished by God by earthquakes, etc., does not arise. If we once admit that God IS, we shall have to admit also that He possesses all conceivable good attributes and being a God possessed of the knowledge of the past and the future He best knows when a particular people by its iniquitous actions has made itself liable to be punished by Him.

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THE IDEALS OF ISLAM

[By Dr. W. M. Weston, D.D., Ph.D.]

From the beginning of human thought one great fundamental problem has confronted the mind of man and has inspired his interest in Religion and Philosophy. Set in the midst of the universe, what must be his attitude towards it, whether he personifies it as God or Gods, or after the manner of modern Science as impersonal Natural Law?

The answer inevitably qualifies all our mental and spiritual, nay even our physical life; and is, therefore, as men have always instinctively recognised, of vital importance. The Greek, the originator of European thought, gave his response in favour of resistance whatever the cost, as symbolised in the drama of Prometheus, the story of the Titans, and throughout the works of Æschylus and Sophocles, and more especially in Euripides. The modern European world, consciously or unconsciously, is the disciple of these thinkers. Where it still acknowledges a God it has reduced Him from Omnipotence to the position of a Constitutional Monarch who needs the co-operation of his subjects for the success of his task.

The ideals of such thinkers are restricted to the present life, and of necessity, however, strenuously they may deny it, are materialistic in character, proposing ends attainable in this world, ends mainly economic, political, industrial, scientific and hedonistic in character.

Now to set mankind in motion towards an end it can realise and achieve, is to introduce a motive of permanent discord into society.

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Hence the unrest, discontent, strife and weariness of life that is so generally the accompaniment and, I contend, the resultant of modern thought.

On the other hand, set men in motion towards an end too lofty ever completely to realise in this world, and you have struck the note of unity.

Asia has given to the world three great religions, and it is with the latest of these that I propose now to deal.

These faiths differ fundamentally from Greek thought inasmuch as instead of inculcating resistance they preach submission, and this is especially true of that taught by the Holy Prophet Muhammed and embodied in the very name of his religion, Islam—Resignation.

It was in the vast spaces of the desert, under the open, wide sky, in the scorching heat of noon and in the starry depths of night, that this great soul learned what he was to teach his fellows and that was to be the inspiration of millions of lives for the centuries to come, and to be proclaimed by the muezzin from the minaret calling the faithful to prayer.

Who that has heard that cry can ever forget its solemnity and beauty, more impressive than any bell, and the resulting cessation from all activities whilst the faithful Muslims abase themselves before their Maker?

"La ilaha illallahu" ("There is no one worthy of worship but Allah").

Thus is proclaimed the sublime yet simple dogma of the faith, and its concomitant moral is expressed in every action of life, "Inshallah." if God will!

This is the central ideal of Islam, and not one that is relegated to mere pious aspiration, nor whose

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contemplation is restricted to a few hours on one day of the week.

Five times a day it is recalled in prayer and actuates the whole life of the devout Muslim. The Greatness, the Power, the Wisdom, the Beneficence and Mercy of God are of the substance of his mind, and submission of his conduct.

In surrender lies the secret of spiritual development, and surely this should be the primary aim of religion. We are far too apt in these days to ignore this truth and to confine religion to its secondary purposes as manifested in conduct, thus ultimately sapping their religious quality altogether.

This submission is no mere idle passivity, for one cannot achieve complete self-surrender save through the active exercise of disciplined strength as I might evidence, if time allowed, from the lives of some Muslim saints.

I had the great privilege of knowing one in the flesh whose name I must withhold, as he still lives. From him I learned all that I am saying now.

Peace through resignation! There is no other road. Without this the inner life—that which most matters—is disordered and distressed—or worse still, scarcely exists; then all is distraction, hurry and anxiety. How few of us know how to keep quiet, how to be patient! Fret and Fume over trifles unworthy of immortal souls.

"A soul immortal, spending all her fires,
Wasting her strength in strenuous idleness,
Thrown into tumult, raptured, or alarmed;
At aught this scene can threaten, or indulge,
Resembles ocean into tempest wrought,
To waft a feather, or to drown a fly."

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Islam is the great ideal then, banishing, as it does, malice, hatred, tyranny and injustice.

The supremacy and oneness of God is followed by the Brotherhood of Man, the law which was proclaimed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad even in his dying address to his followers :

" Ye are one brotherhood. Sacred and inviolable hath God made the life and property of each of you unto the other, until ye meet your Lord. "

From this arises the ideal of tolerance of other faiths which, some may be surprised to learn, and here I may interpose the remark, that practically all that we in Europe hear of the religion of Islam is distorted and incorrect, largely owing to the fact that religion has been confounded with the political system of the Turkish Empire, with which it had no more to do than Christianity has to do with most European Governments. And so with the former systems of rule in the various countries of Northern Africa.

The Moorish kingdoms of Spain, the Calihpate of Baghdad, and even, as a matter of fact, the Empire of Turkey all furnish examples of tolerance at periods when the very idea was unheard of in Christian Europe.

An actual example of this spirit of broadmindedness is to be found in the fact that so many delegates and pilgrims are visiting Carthage, in North Africa, for the Eucharistic Congress that there is great difficulty in providing accommodation. In view of which they leading Moslems of Tunis and the neighbourhood have most generosly thrown open their houses to these Christian visitors.

In studying the religon of Islam I was most forcibly struck with the fact that the teachings of the Holy

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Prophet anticipated by nearly thirteen centuries some of those ideals which are only now gaining establishment in Europe.

Notable amongst these is the ideal of temperance in eating and drinking, especially the latter, inasmuch as total abstinence from all intoxicants is prescribed by the Holy Quran.

The ideal of human equality of opportunity has nowhere been more emphatically proclaimed and practised than in Islam, as innumerable examples from history testify.

"Under Muhammad," says Meredith Townsend "there sprang up a form of democratic equality more absolute than the world has elsewhere seen. Claims of birth and wealth could be of no value in the presence of a Master whose favour implied the favour of the Deity. The proudest Arab could not murmur if God chose a slave like Zaid to be the leader of armies, and visibly confirmed his choice with the seal of victory.

"It was a principle also of the new sect that Islam extinguished all (former) relations. The slave, once a Moslem, was dearer than any kinsman; the pagan, once a Moslem, might preach, if the Prophet bade, to attentive listeners."

Here we have an ideal preached, and, be it noted, practised, thirteen centuries ago, which modern Europe has only recently reached.

To quote once more, "the Creed, as evolved at Mecca, has a majestic simplicity, lost to Europeans in their unconscious confusion between creed and laws."

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Behold it! "La ilaha illallhu, Muhammad-ur-rasulullah." "There is no one worthy of worship but Allah, and Muhammad is His Apostle."

A creed within the mental scope of the simplest of mortals, yet containing implication of the most far-reaching and deep-sounding character. It partakes of the simplicity, the austerity, the stern beauty and immensity of the great wastes where it was first promulgated.

There is one subject which I must not pass over in silence, as it is the point on which there is the grossest misunderstanding regarding the religion of Islam among non-Moslems, and that is the ideals of the Faith as regards woman.

The answer, briefly stated, is that the same ideals apply in Islam to women as to men. There is no distinction. Any reader of the Holy Quran knows this, but very few, at least here in England, have ever even seen a copy of the Muslim Scriptures.

But it will be objected, what about polygamy? It is not my purpose to discuss that institution at large, but let me remind you the Holy Prophet Muhammad did not invent polygamy; it existed from the beginnings of history. Remember when we speak of the ideal for the womanhood it should apply to all women, not merely to those of the wealthier classes.

Those who have acquiesced for centuries in the social conditions of women of the poorer classes, and in the unofficial or official institution of prostitution, with all its calamitous and degrading consequences, such as have obtained in Europe and America, are hardly in a position to lecture others on the question of degradation. Where are the ideals for these?

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On the other hand, the Islamic ideal applies to and is practised towards every Muslim woman.

Very briefly and, I fear, very inadequately I have endeavoured in the foregoing pages to note down the ideals of a Faith which is not my own, as I have observed them by studying its Scriptures, the life of its great Founder, and the lives of those who profess it, amongst whom I have sojourned in my travels.

Save among those who believe consciously or unconsciously in theocratic institutions, it cannot be expected that religion as such has primary concern with secular institutions. Its main purpose must be concerned with the relations of the Creator and His creatures and their resulting relations to each other. Submission to the will of God and juctice to our fellow-creatures, and thereby peace in our lives, I perceive as the chief ideals of Islam.

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

THE ISLAMIC CALIPHATE*

How is a Khalifa Appointed?

THE office of the Khalifa is to be filled by election and not by designation according to Mawardi, Al Baghdadi and all other Sunni authorities. Prof. Gibb says that this conclusion on the part of the Muslim jurists of the Sunni school is "the rationalisation of the history of the Community." But it should be remembered that the institution of the Islamic Khilafat began with the election of Hazrat Abu Bakr, and at that time there were no previous precedents from which speculative deductions could be drawn. Their action was based upon the Word of God. No books were, however, written in those days on such subjects, so later writers had just to note the various precedents and draw their conclusions. Prof. Gibb is right in referring to the *Ijma* (My community will never agree upon an error) as being a source of guidance. But I would not go so far as to assert that "all the imposing fabric of interpretation of the sources is ***merely*** the ***post eventum*** justification of the precedents which

*This article has been taken from the beautiful monograph on the same subject recently written by Maulvi A. R. Dard, M.A., Imam of the London Mosque.—*Ed.*

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have been ratified by *Ijma*." It may be true, as I have already indicated, in the case of the later writers. But the unanimous verdict of the Companions of the Holy Prophet immediately after his death in laying the very foundations of the Khilafat on an elective principle cannot by any means be regarded as "the *post eventum* justification of the precedents."

The very first *Ijma* of the Community must be based upon divine guidance—the Word of God and the sayings of the Holy Prophet, with which the Community was so well equipped at that time. They might not have thought it necessary at that time to formulate a theory by speculative deduction from the original sources but that they should have based their decision upon them cannot be doubted. The principle of Khilafat was established before any reference to the "infallibility" of the *Ijma* could have been made. So it would be wrong to suppose that the principle of the elective institution was based upon theory of the efficacy of the *Ijma*.

Hence we must look to the Word of God for guidance in the matter: That the Khilafat is obligatory by revelation is already mentioned. Now the Holy Quran says: "Allah commands you to entrust the responsibility of government to those worthy of it; and when you govern and judge between people, govern with justice" (iv: 58). Rulership is here defined as a valuable trust and the people are commanded not to entrust it to a person who is not worthy of the trust.

The words of the Holy Quran make it clear that the appointment of the ruler is in the hands of the people who are sovereign for the purpose. Therefore the office of the Khalifa, the Supreme Head of the Muslims, is to be filled through the people and for this purpose it is necessary to ascertain the "will of the people" which is the ultimate authority. Hence the question of designation, ordination and consecration by a Superior Authority does not arise. The principle of heredity is also eliminated. The Khalifa must therefore be elected.

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The theory of designation adopted by the Shia finds no support in the Quran. And their claim that the Holy Prophet implicitly or explicitly nominated Hazrat Ali to succeed him has no historical evidence behind it. The fact that Hazrat Ali himself acknowledged the first three Khalifas knocks the bottom out of the whole fabric of the Shia-dogma. Sir William Muir says: "There is absolutely nothing in the antecedents of Aly, or his subsequent history, to render it in the least probable that during the first two caliphates, he advanced any claim whatever, or indeed was in a position to do so" (p. 6, *Annals of the Early Caliphate*, London, 1883). If the appointment of the Khalifa lies with God, it must prevail in actual life. The Khalifa is to rule over people and guide them, and for this it is obviously necessary that they should acknowledge him as such. Hazrats Abu Bakr, Omar, Osman and Ali were acknowledged as Khalifas and they actually performed the function, therefore, it can be said that they were all appointed by God. But it is an insult to God to suggest that He should appoint a man as a Khalifa and then let His unworthy creatures usurp all his rights and powers in actual life, so much so that His own representative is compelled to pay homage to the usurpers. I am not saying that the whole world should accept him, but that a number of the believers including himself must openly acknowledge him as such so that the purpose of his appointment may be fulfilled to some extent at least. This can only be done when the office is filled by election.

It should be remembered that the case of a prophet or a *mujaddid* is quite different. He is directly commissioned by God and it does not matter for this purpose if those who do not believe in him reject him. But the Khalifa holds no such authority from God; his mission is only to carry on the prophet's work after him on the lines that he has laid down. The prophet establishes a movement and leaves a community behind him. The work of the Khalifa is to look after it and see that it grows, expands and prospers. But if the community does not even recognise the Khalifa, the

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object of his appointment can never be fulfilled. Therefore the Shia doctrine is quite untenable.

Ascertaining the "Will of the People"

The "limited vote," the "cumulative vote," the "transferable vote," the "alternative vote," and the "second ballot" are some of the ways adopted to secure representation of the people. Apart from the fact that under all these systems Corrupt Practices Acts have to be passed to prevent or minimise the dangers of intimidation, bribery and the vicious principle of "to the victors belong the spoils," it is admitted that all these devices "ignore the essential fact that in any case a representative system can only result in a rather arbitrary approximation to correspondence with the opinions of the electorate." It was stated before the British Royal Commission that in Belgium, in spite of "proportional representation," both in 1900 and in 1902 a majority of members was returned by a minority of votes.

Mr. Hugh Chisholm, editor of the 11th edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, says: "The fact is that no 'representation' can reflect the views of those 'represented' as accurately as 'presentation' by those entitled personally to speak. The result is seen in the increasing desire in really democratic countries to supplement representative government by some form of Referendum, or direct appeal to the electors for their own personal opinion on a distinct issue . . . a method which involves fundamentally the addition of a 'presentative' element to the representative system."

Islam has preserved this presentative element in the matter of the election of the Khalifa. The people are required to gather together for this purpose. This is a fundamental principle. As a rule they should also personally swear allegiance at the hands of the Khalifa. But as Islam is a practical religion and possesses an elasticity to make it universal, therefore, details of the manner of election are left to the people

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themselves. A few broad principles of election have, however, been established for the guidance of the people. The Holy Prophet says: "It is your duty to follow me and the Caliphs after me who are rightly guided. Stick to it." And they are further specified by the words: "Khilafat will last among my followers for 30 years, then there will be kingship" (Tirmizi). According to these words Sunni Muslims have unanimously accepted the view that the first four Caliphs are the ones who are meant here and that it is they whose example is to be followed. Hence the broad principles of election are confined to these four precedents.

Hazrat Abu Bakr was elected in an open meeting where he himself and a large number of the electors were personally present. The meeting was open to every Muslim and everybody could say freely what he wanted to say and it was said. There was more than one proposal and yet Hazrat Abu Bakr was elected to the high office and that too in a meeting of the citizens of Medina who originally wanted another person from among themselves to be their leader. Neither was the vote "limited," "cumulative," "transferable," "alternative" or "secret." There was no possibility of intimidation, bribery, or any other corrupt and illegal practice which charac terises the so-called democratic and civilised elections of to-day. On the other hand there was manifest the keenest spirit of equality, fraternity, honesty and devotion to what is highest in human life. Every one personally swore allegiance at the hands of the Leader thus elected. "And so homage was done on all sides to Abu Bakr," says Muir. The next day again he was saluted as Caliph by acclamation immediately before he delivered his inaugural address. How unlike the democratic elections of to-day! No wonder the interest of the electorate is tending nowadays to dwindle; party organisation pushes its nominee to success over the heads of others and the electorate do not even know their representative!

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The second precedent is that of Omar's succession to the Caliphate. Hazrat Abu Bakr, before his end, consulted Abdur Rahman and then Othman and then Talha. Then he desired "to obtain the assent of the people," and called out to the citizens assembled in the Great Mosque: "Are ye satisfied with him whom I have appointed over you?" And the people answered with one voice "Yea, we will obey" (*Ibid.*, p. 118).

No one can call it an arbitrary nomination. Omar was no doubt appointed Caliph by Hazrat Abu Bakr, but the appointment took effect only with the final and express assent and approval of the people. So it would not be wrong to call it an election because the "will of the people" was definitely ascertained and it was only then that he was proclaimed as Caliph, though the manner of ascertaining the "will of the people" was different. It goes to the credit of Hazrat Abu Bakr that he interpreted the "will of the people" correctly and in his confidence appointed Omar, who was no relation of his, as his successor. Call it election or nomination, the event is clear enough to serve as a precedent as it is.

Hazrat Othman's appointment is a third kind of precedent. Hazrat Omar nominated "the six chiefest Companions, on one or other of whom he knew that the choice must needs fall, to be the electors of a successor from amongst themselves." And Abdur Rahman, on whom fell the final choice, had already sounded the views of the people; therefore when he selected Othman it was just the wish of the people as is evident from the fact that when he saluted Othman as Caliph "all the people followed his example." Hazrat Ali was publicly elected.

In all these cases it is clear that it was the "will of the people" which prevailed, though the manner of ascertaining it was different in each case. Hence the office is not hereditary but an elective one.

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Khalifa Appointed for Life

The next point that emerges clearly from these precedents is that the Khalifa is elected for life. No time limit has ever been, expressly or implicitly, directly or indirectly, set for his term. It has never been thought of. And it is necessary that it should be so. Frequent elections not only involve a good deal of unnecessary and avoidable trouble and expense, but also dislocate business and violently disturb the normal function of the machinery of government. And then there is less of stability, cohesion and uniformity which are necessary for the progress and development of a community. Then the continued existence of the previous Heads of the Government introduces an element of awkwardness for all, and in some cases, it leads to all kinds of intrigue, conspiracy and even rebellion. It is therefore in the interest of the community and the country that its Head be appointed for life and not only for a short period of time.

No Abdication

Now there arise two important questions at this stage; abdication and deposition. It is obvious that when a person accepts an office for life, he automatically forfeits the right of abdication. It might have been possible if at the time of his election a provision or reservation were made by him to that effect. But there is no trace of anything like that in any of the precedents mentioned above. So it is out of the question. It would really be nothing less than the betrayal of a most sacred trust. The community needs his services and he is capable of discharging his duty and the people not only want him but expressly and actually appoint him as their leader and he accepts the office for life, and then to think of abdication would either be the height of folly, or cowardice or faithlessness which could not be condoned for any reason. To refer to the case of Imam Hasan in this connection is not of much help. It appears that he retired from the scene with credit. His would have

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been a proper abdication if the homage paid to him by the Kufans had been endorsed by the rest of the Muslims. All that seems to have happened was a withdrawal of his claim to the Caliphate after his provisional acceptance.

No Deposition

Now with regard to deposition it must be remembered that at the time of the election of a man to the high office of the Khalifa there is made no express provision for the purpose. Even if we take the Khilafat to be a pure contract, which it is not, we do not meet with any clear condition in any of these precedents—the sole basis of the theory—which might require that the contract would be dissolved under such and such circumstances. The very idea is foreign. If there existed any such clause, the man who accepted the office would not leave himself at the mercy or whim of the electorate in this matter. After all he must have some security to hold the office. Every sensible person should insist either on the express specification of the period for which he is expected to run the administration or on the express mention of the things that would dissolve the "contract" and also the procedure to be adopted in such a case. Anyhow, it would be the height of injustice to make a contract with a man without telling him the specific and the essential conditions governing it and then dissolve it in an arbitrary manner imagining the conditions to exist.

On the other hand, the clear understanding that is given to the Khalifa at the time of his election is that he is elected for life. The first assumption therefore should be that deposition is out of the question. Then the office is so high and sacred that it would be an insult to it if the incumbent were to be always liable to deposition. To my mind it would be a disgrace to the faith and the people themselves that they fill their highest office with the best man fitted for it from among themselves and then render him exposed to deposition at the fancy of Tom, Dick and Harry. If

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the best of them turns out unsatisfactory, what good can be expected of anyone else? Probably the next one would prove worse, so it would be unsafe and unwise to make the change. That is why Mawardi and others definitely lay down that "a duly elected Imam cannot be displaced in favour of a worthier candidate" (Gibb). So it is not right to say that "the Caliphate is a contract bilateral in its nature," and that "the Caliph is bound to act in conformity with certain principles the non-observance of which deprives him of the right to command obedience." We have seen that Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Omar and Hazrat Ali were not bound in any way at the time of their election. There was no mention of the principles "the non-observance" of which would deprive them of the right to command obedience. There was no one to administer to them any oath of allegiance to any principles. Therefore the conclusion has no foundation at all.

But it might be said that the conditions were understood and implicit in the election itself. If it were so, the question should have been raised during the Caliphate of any of these three Caliphs of Islam. People differed from them and even criticised their actions and some of them even rebelled and openly fought against them, but it is significant that there is not a single instance where this "understood" condition was invoked or even mentioned or referred to. It shows clearly that there exists no such condition in the contract, if it is a contract at all, which can, *ipso jure* or otherwise, absolve the people from allegiance or deprive the Caliph of his authority.

I admit that the Khilafat is an Islamic institution and that the electors as well as the elected must be Muslims and in theory it is obvious that if the Khalifa or his electors cease to be Muslims they are not to be governed by the law of Islam. If a man says that he is no longer a Muslim, it goes without saying that he will have to be treated as such. He cannot then hold any office at all in the community. (Mawardi

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and Baghdadi.) But when a Khalifa is sincere in his profession of the faith and claims to defend, maintain and uphold Islam, how can he be declared a non-Muslim to deprive him of the seat of the Khilafat? He is by no means infallible and is even liable to commit mistakes; yet, so long as he holds that high office, he is admittedly the final authority in all matters for all practical purposes. To sit, therefore, in judgment upon the Head of the church or the state would be a sheer impossibility in actual life.

The same would be the case if we take a social or political defect into consideration. Who is going to be the judge? D. B. Macdonald says in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*: "Private immorality or even tyranny are no grounds for deposing him." Christian writers have a knack of giving their own twist to the principles of Islam and make insinuations. To talk of private immorality is sheer nonsense. It does not mean that Islam tolerates tyranny or immorality, it only means that the high officials of the State must enjoy immunity from the vicious attacks of malicious people. If the high office were to be exposed to the attacks of any and every body, a trivial matter involving disaffection or discontent could lead to a formal proposal or a campaign for deposition. Instead of discharging the fundamental obligations attached to his office the Khalifa would probably have to be busy always defending himself against every man in the street. Such a state of affairs would not only be a negation of government, but a public scandal and a disgrace to the whole of the community. It is a different matter if the Khalifa, out of a high sense of duty and righteousness, subjects himself to a tribunal of justice in a matter concerning his private property. But to make his official rights and powers and his very office, the target of attacks would be the height of injustice and sheer folly. In short, the deposition of an Islamic Khalifa is an impossibility like that of an unbelieving prophet. That is why there are provided no legal means at all for deposing a Khalifa.

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The Islamic Khilafat appears to be "the Commonwealth by Institution" envisaged by Hobbes. "A Commonwealth," he says, "is said to be instituted, when a Multitude of men do Agree and Covenant, everyone, with everyone, that to whatsoever Man or Assembly of Men, shall be given by the major part, the Right to Present the Person of them all (that is to say, to be their Representative); everyone, as well he that voted for it, as he that voted against it, shall Authorise all the Actions and Judgments, of that Man, or Assembly of men, in the same manner, as if they were his own, to the end, to live peaceably amongst themselves, and be protected against other men" (p. 120). Regarding the deposing of such a Sovereign Hobbes says, "If they depose him, they take from him that which is his own, and so again it is injustice."

Regarding the Covenant he lays down: "That he which is made Sovereign maketh no Covenant with his subjects beforehand, is manifest; because either he must make it with the whole multitude, as one party to the Covenant; or he must make a several Covenant with every man. With the whole, as one party, it is impossible; because as yet they are not one Person: and if he make so many several Covenants as there be men, those Covenants after he hath the Sovereignty are void, because what act soever can be pretended by any one of them for breach thereof, is the act both of himself, and of all the rest, because done in the person, and by the Right of every one of them in particular. Besides, if any one, or more of them, pretend a breach of the Covenant made by the Sovereign at his Institution; and others, or one other of his subjects, or himself alone, pretend there was no such breach, there is in this case, no Judge to decide the controversy" (p. 122).

The fact that in the Islamic oath of allegiance to the Khalifa every member of the Commonwealth binds himself to obey the Khalifa only in things that are good, does not mean that the Khalifa binds himself to the definition of good as understood by the individual concerned. Besides this the oath of allegiance is only

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a posterior affair and comes into being after the actual institution; therefore it cannot have a retrospective effect. It does not apply to and cannot govern what has taken place already. If, however, it must be taken as a condition of the institution, then it would cause a further and worse complication. The same words are used by the believers when they accept a prophet of God. If, therefore, obedience is to be legally limited on the basis of this formula, then we shall have to suppose the same in respect of the Holy Prophet of Islam also, *viz.*, A Muslim binds himself to obey the Prophet only in things which the individual regards as good; while this is against the consensus of opinion and against the very spirit as well as the letter of the Word of God Himself. Islam means complete surrender and our belief in the Prophet is not perfect unless and until we obey him in each and every detail and that too most unreservedly.

To say that an undertaking was taken by Abdul Rahman from Hazrat Othman prior to his appointment does not in the least invalidate the conclusion which I have stated above. In the first place it is only one precedent against the three precedents left by Hazrat Abu Bakr, Hazrat Omar and Hazrat Ali. Then it was just a device of Abdur Rahman himself. The election would have been equally valid if he had not put that question to Hazrat Othman. There is nothing to show that this question was asked on that occasion because it formed an essential feature of the election. Neither was it asked at the explicit or implicit wish of the people. Hazrat Othman was not technically bound to the people as a result of that; even if he were bound in that manner it could not justify his deposition by the people concerned because they had no such right by stipulation or otherwise. To remove all doubts the situation did actually arise in the case of Hazrat Othman and he created an express precedent to the contrary. The rebels and malcontents did demand abdication from him and then they wanted to depose him. But he resolutely refused and quoted his authority for his refusal: The Holy Prophet had said to Hazrat Othman: "Allah will

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clothe thee with a garment. If people demand of thee to put it off, thou must not put it off." (Tirmizi.) Hazrat Othmam addressed the insurgents in these words: "As to abdication, I am not going to put off the garment that Allah has put on me so that it may not become a precedent after me. Whenever the people dislike their leader, they would depose him" (*Iqdul Farid*, p. 83). Hazrat Ali even did not yield to the demand which was made for his deposition. If the question of Abdur Rahman was a binding clause of the election of Hazrat Othman, the non-observance of which legally justified his deposition, why did not the rebels take advantage of it? The fact that the rebels did not even try to invoke that clause in their favour is a proof positive of the fact that Abdur Rahman's question and Hazrat Othman's answer dit not at all provide any legitimate ground for the dissolution of the imaginary contract of the Khilafat.

Now there is one more point which must be settled here before I proceed further; as I feel sure that it must be lurking in the minds of all those who call themselves democratic. If it is the "will of the people" which is sovereign in the matter of the election of the Khalifa, it is only fair that they should have the right of removing him if they are so minded after the election. If it be not so, then Islam is not a democratic religion.

To answer this question I must make clear at the outset that whether Islam is or is not a democratic religion should not detain us here. Democracy has yet its own position to vindicate against the other forms of government; and it is by no means universally accepted that a democratic government is the best one. Nor have we yet a government anywhere in the world which can be truly called a fully democratic government. What we are considering here is the Islamic form of government, its reasonableness and its excellence.

There is no doubt that it is the "will of the people"

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which determines the election of the Khalifa. And according to the Koranic verse (IV : 58) where the words used are 'Toaddul amanat' the right of government proceeds from the people and so far as the executive power is concerned it is the pepole themselves who agree to entrust it to the Sovereign by his election. But it must not be understood that the "will of the people" determines the whole of the Law also. The people are not supreme in everything by any means. They cannot pass any legislation that they like as they are supposed to do in the so-called democratic countries. The Law is already there. It has been revealed by the Almighty and not even the Khalifa can alter a tittle. It is a detailed law covering every sphere of human activity. Even its interpretation and application by the Holy Prophet is most authoritative and cannot be changed. All that needs be done is its administration for which the Khalifa is elected. In this sense therefore the right of government proceeds directly from God who is the Real sovereign. Hence the Khalifa, if he is a true one, is not only the leader of the Muslims but also the vicegerent of God and the representative of the Prophet whom he succeeds. As such he cannot be deposed; the people have no such power. A true Muslim must not even think of such a course of action. And it is really this aspect which is the most important one.

As it is, and so long as it is, the Law of God that the Khalifa has to administer, it should be the concern of God to see that the right kind of man is appointed as the Khalifa. And the Holy Quran is explicit in laying down that it is God Himself Who appoints the Islamic Khalifas. The verse embodying the principle and the prophecy runs as follows:—God has promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will most surely make them Khalifas in the land, as He made Khalifas those who were before them, and that He will most surely establish for them their religion which he has chosen for them, and that after their state of fear He will give them security in its place. They will worship Me and naught will they join with Me

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And whoso disbelieve after that they it is who are disobedient" (24 : 56). The deposition of the Khalifas whom God appoints is most decidedly out of the power of the people.

It is true that the Khalifa is elected by the people, but it does not mean that they can do what they like with him after the election. There is nothing unusual in this. There are several instances in Nature where men are the apparent means of producing something which they cannot control or unmake afterwards.

Take the case of the birth of a child. A man and a woman agree to live together and thus become the instruments for the creation of a soul. But when the child is born they have no right to take its life. As a matter of fact even if they killed it, they could not unmake the soul which lives for ever. In the same way people are just the instruments through which a Khalifa is appointed. They are not the real makers thereof ; and when the Khalifa is made, they have no power to unmake him in any way.

A man with a grain of common sense would not do a thing to-day and undo it the next day. Even stone structures are not raised to be soon destroyed by the builders themselves. When a whole people erect a structure—say a monument, an embankment, a palace, or a fortress—they certainly do not like that it be destroyed in their lifetime. Why then should a Khalifa be deposed? A Khalifa, elected by the entire Community as the best individual, to perform the highest functions of the State ! After all he is not a chaprasi who can be dismissed at any excuse.

A fool indeed is he who builds a house to-day and pulls it down the next day. A nation can, no doubt, if it must be foolish, destroy its own organisation and fortifications, but it must remember that they will only render themselves unsafe and exposed to their enemies from within and from without. If a pack of knaves must rebel against the Khalifa for their selfish and ignoble motives, nay, they might kill him if they want

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to—Hazrat Othman's murder does not preclude such a possiblity; but they must remember that they and their children shall have to pay heavily for this heinous crime of theirs. They shall have to suffer and suffer terribly they must. But that Islam allows deposition is the vilest lie that has ever been fabricated. Sunni jurists all agree on this point; and woe to the man, nay cursed be he who deliberately goes blind and fights his own Creator and the Creator of all the worlds. It were better if he were not born, and better still if he had died before lighting the match to set such a benevolent institution on fire.

Is the Khalifa a Despot?

I have shown that the Khalifa is generally elected and that he holds office for life and that he cannot be deposed; but it does not mean that Islam provides nothing to safeguard the rights of the people and that they have no voice at all in any matter. The people are not left at the utter mercy or whim of the Khalifa to be driven by him like dumb cattle. As I have already indicated the Khilafat is a trust; consequently its acceptance involves certain duties. The greatest safeguard provided in the interests of the people is the Divine Law incorporated in the inviolable constitution contained in the Quran and the Hadith. The Khalifa is bound to act upon the Word of God and the sayings of the Holy Prophet; not because it forms an essential condition of any "contract" of Khilafat in express or implicit words to that effect, but because the Khalifa, prior to his election, has shown practically for a long time that he is a true Muslim to the satisfaction of the people so much so that when the services of the best man for the cause of the community are required the choice of the people falls upon him to hold the sacred trust. This in itself should constitute the best safeguard, otherwise verbal contracts can often turn out mere scraps of paper. Then the Khalifa cannot alter or amend the Islamic law and is himself bound by it as much as any other member of the community. It is this that should make Islam to be the most democratic of religions. As a private person the king has no more rights, and this is the sacred constitution of the faith.

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Then the Khalifa is instructed to consult the people. The Quran lays down that the affairs of the Muslims should be settled with mutual counsel (42 : 39). Even the Holy Prophet, from whom the Khalifa inherits all his powers and functions, was instructed as follows : "Consult them in government, but when thou hast made up thy mind then trust in Allah alone" (3 : 159). "There is no Khilafat without consultation" (*Izalatul Khifa*). It is clear, therefore, that the Khalifa is required to ascertain the "will of the people," which is the essence of democracy. There are however no rigid rules and regulations to determine the precise forms of ascertaining it. It is left to the common sense of the Khalifa to suit the particular requirements of the time. He can consult the people in any way he likes. He may consult some or all of them. He may consult them in this or that matter, whether it be small or great. He may do so whenever and howsoever he pleases. But that he must consult is laid down in the law itself. "Consultation affords a large scope of utilising the skill, experience and knowledge of every member of the community." For the sake of stability and efficiency he will have to discharge his duty in a conscientious manner. So Islam gives ample opportunity to the people to make their voice heard, and according to the practice of the Islamic Khalifas and the Holy Prophet he should attach great weight to the opinion of the people, though it would not be right if he were to yield to every voice that is raised in an indiscriminate manner. It will only lead to confusion and agitation. He is not bound to bow to the majority. He can, if necessary, reject the advice of the people. The people are by no means to be treated as angels ; and as the Law which the Khalifa is to administer is Divine, therefore he must be careful. He is the guardian of the Law which is the real and inviolable safeguard for the truest rights and interests of the people. If it were the mere wish of the people that must be carried out in everything, then the people could never rise higher than themselves, and make any progress ; and if they are not rightly educated—which is a rare condition even in

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our own day—the greater likelihood is that the people would degenerate. The Ecclesia at Athens made Aristotle to restrict the word democracy to bad popular government. Therefore the Khalifa is not only instructed to ascertain the will of the people but he is also required to watch, in the light of the Law, that the will of the people itself does not go astary much to their own detriment. So Islam provides every reasonable protection in its constitution against the violation of the true and legitimate interests and rights of the people.

Individual Freedom

Islam inculcates complete obedience to the Khalifa (*Muslim, Mishkat*); but it does not mean that the individual is debarred from holding his own opinions. One is free to form and keep one's own views on all questions. In order to be a member of the community it is obvious that he must believe in the fundamental and essential principles of the faith, otherwise he has no right to be considered as such. But apart from that he can have his own individual views on all matters. It is desirable that he should think for himself. But in the case of a difference of opinion with the prevailing view, he is not allowed to propagate his personal views so that there might not be caused any split in the community.

If any member of the Muslim Commonwealth honestly and truly believes that for one reason or another he cannot continue to remain its member, he is at perfect liberty to declare his intention and act accordingly. He can recant, as there is no compulsion in matters of faith. Similarly, if a person thinks that the Khalifa is not a fit and proper person to be his spiritual guide and leader, he can withdraw his allegiance from him. There is complete freedom of conscience in Islam. But it must be pointed out that it is a very serious step. The Khalifa is the vicegerent of God and to disobey him is to deprive oneself of all light and real life. Hence it is necessary that the greatest possible care be taken in making this decision.

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Care should also be taken that this freedom of conscience is not abused in any way. An apostate must not raise a standard of revolt and poison the minds of others against the faith or the Khalifa or do anything calculated to injure the person or the office of the Khalifa. Such activity will be dealt with only as treason or rebellion. No authority could ever allow such things. Therefore there must be no subversive activities of any kind within the jurisdiction of the Khalifa.

Apart from these extreme cases, Muslims are required to obey the Khalifa under all circumstances. Obada relates from the Holy Prophet that Muslims should obey their Ameer unless they see what is called "*Kufri bawwah*" (manifest unbelief) in him and even then they should have a clear authority from Allah to decide their course of conduct (*Bukari, Kitabul Fitan*).

If a well-wisher of the community finds that a particular Khalifa is not administering the affairs of the state or the church as he should in accordance with the law and the dignity of the office and is out only to aggrandise himself and oppress the people, he is free, as a matter of fact it is desired, that he should respectfully but courageously tender his word of advice (*Mishkat*). But if the Khalifa persists in his wrong course and the well-wisher has no legal and legitimate course left for him to put a stop to the mismanagement of affairs, he should keep his peace and not disturb the peace of the country. He can, of course, leave the country and do what he likes. But the best course probably would be to approach God and pray to Him so that if he is right, God may correct the Khalifa; and if he himself is in the wrong, God may show him the right way in all things and forgive him. Then he should leave the decision in the hands of God if he is a true believer.